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[EXTERNAL] Comments on ANWR Drilling

1 message

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I am commenting on the proposal to drill for oil and gas in the Arctic Refuge.

While I believe we need energy sources from multiple sources - oil, gas, solar, and wind and I acknowledge we are dependent on oil for many essential products, I am very much opposed to opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to drilling. The following are my reasons:

- The ANWR was reserved for protection for very specific reasons and those reasons have not changed. It is as unique and ecologically important and fragile as it was back when it was designated.
- The most promising and economically feasible oil fields are in the lower 48 states and those should continue to be exploited
- Right now, the oil and gas industry has a massive surplus of oil and gas leases and permits. Less than half of federal acreage under lease is currently producing. Last year industry bid on just 7 percent of federal acreage offered for lease at auction, the lowest share ever over the past decade. These facts demonstrate there is not an energy emergency or compelling reason to explore for oil in ANWR. It would do no good to have a glut of supply at this time - it doesn't make business sense. Furthermore, based on last year's sale of more than 10 million acres in the U.S.'s National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska brought in bids on less than one percent of the acres offered. Additionally, there is the potential for exploring and drilling in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas. Clearly, there is not a business case to be made for opening up additional acreage to leases.
- Opening up the ANWR would compromise the interests of Native Alaskan communities who rely on the Refuge for subsistence and cultural practices.
- Opening up ANWR to drilling would cause serious impacts from the infrastructure that would be needed to support operations. These impacts would irrevocable damage to one of the most sensitive and pristine places on the planet (see USFWS 2015 multi-year review).

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge deserves continued protection for the same unique values and resources that served as the basis for the original designation. This important place needs to be passed on to future generations as it is. I request that ANWR not be opened up for oil and gas leases, regardless of drilling techniques or promises to do it safely. No human activity, certainly large operations such as oil and gas exploration are risk free. No reasons have been presented to justify the risks posed by the proposal.

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